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WRKO Radio Interview with Attorney Steven Kelly
Re: St. Paul's School – Owen Labrie
June 2, 2016

Interviewer A lawsuit was filed on Wednesday in US District Court in Concord, New Hampshire, blaming the 2014 sexual assault of a then 15 year old freshman girl on St. Paul's which is a boarding school in Concord, New Hampshire, fostering, permitting and condoning a tradition of ritualized statutory rape called the senior salute. We're joined now by Steven Kelly. He's the attorney representing the family. Hi Steven, welcome to the show.

Steven Kelly Thank you for having me.

Interviewer So what is the goal. What is the family trying to accomplish with their lawsuit against St. Paul's?

Steven Kelly They are trying to accomplish systematic change in a word. The family loved this school. The father was a scholarship student there who has gone on to be successful in the financial field.. His other older daughter graduated from the school. They were shocked and appalled by how far the school has strayed from its core mission and from what its advertised as which is a top notch Episcopal school. So their goal really is to protect the children that are in the care of the school and to bring about systematic change. They tried a lot of different ways short of bringing a lawsuit, but unfortunately here we are.

Interviewer What is the cost of attending St. Paul's?

Steven Kelly Approximately \$60,000. A little less than \$60,000 per year.

Interviewer Now you say they attempted to change without having to file a lawsuit. In what way did they attempt to modify the behavior of the school?

Steven Kelly Constant dialog with the school throughout. They sent their daughter back. The victim went back to the school after the sexual assault and tried to stick it out and faced retaliation, bullying etc.

Interviewer From the teachers or the from the other students?

Steven Kelly From both really. I don't want to say everyone there was unsympathetic. There were some people there who were tremendously supportive of her. But for the most part the school culture is circle the wagon and don't attack us. It's blame the victim. There was a rallying of the community around Labrie and not really in favor of the victim which was very disturbing and shocking to the family.

Interviewer So what is the proces of the lawsuit? Is there going to be a jury trial or how would something like this work?

Steven Kelly Yes. Ultimately in about a year probably there will be a jury seated from across the State of New Hampshire in the federal court, a jury of 12. And between here and there there's a lot of investigation that gets done by both sides so there's a long litigation process to go through but at the end of the day there's going to be a jury trial.

Interviewer How long would you anticipate this taking because the young lady was 15 at the time which makes her 17 now. Is this something that's going to drag on? I'm just thinking about, for her, she's got to want to get this behind her.

Steven Kelly She does, but at the same time there's a real need for justice. She came forward and has done this and pursued this largely to stop what's going on there. So she's very determined to go the distance. It's not going to be easy Nobody says it is. It's very difficult. Very hard for her. But she and her family are very determined to do what they think is right and bring the school back to its mission.

Interviewer Steve do you have any sense as to how long the senior salute has been a tradition at St. Paul's? It sounded like, as I learned about it, it was in the media heavily, it sounded like something that had been going on for years.

Steven Kelly Well there's a lot of conflicting testimony and evidence about whether, how long the senior salute itself, the term senior salute has been going on but there's no controversy about the concept of games of sexual conquest at the school and the concept of what they call scoring. So senior boys, or senior men really, praying upon freshman underage girls and keeping a tally of that. That concept has been going on for years at the school. For many years. There's no doubt about it. The only question is whether the term senior salute itself how far that goes back. We know it goes back at least 3 years. We know that the Rector's wife, the Rector is the head of the school, received an invitation for the senior salute a year prior to the sexual assault of my client.

Interviewer Wow.

Steven Kelly So no matter what you call it, this concept of these games of sexual conquest has been longstanding at the school.

Interviewer Is your client's family looking for monetary damages?

Steven Kelly Well that's what we get in a lawsuit. Unfortunately that's all we can really get. But you know, like a lot of tort cases, this is not about the money. This is about the way that we, this is the mechanism that we use to get to the change which is really the goal. This family really does care about this

school and schools like it. They didn't ask to be put in this situation. They never wanted to be affiliated with the cause of sexual assault. They didn't ask to do that but that found themselves in this situation and they experienced it and they see what it's like and how difficult it is and how the culture, the community reacts to victims of sexual assault and they've seen up close the problems at the school and that has caused them to be determined to change it.

Interviewer Has anybody at the school been fired?

Steven Kelly Not to my knowledge.

Interviewer Okay. Well Steven thank you very much for joining us. I appreciate your time.

Steven Kelly Thanks for having me.

Interviewer That's Steven Kelly. He's the attorney representing the family of the young girl that was sexually assaulted at St. Paul's and pursuing litigation against the school.

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